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West Valley site connects to new electrical distribution system

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Springville Journal Staff

WEST VALLEY – The Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management and its prime contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley recently completed the installation of a new electrical service and distribution system to provide power to the site's infrastructure. Work was performed by the Site Operations Department, which is responsible for site utilities and maintenance activities.



Workers install a new electrical recloser on the site's new switchgear station. The recloser will act like a circuit breaker if the system experiences any type of electrical interruption.

"The completion of this work evolution will not only bring many benefits to the future cleanup of our EM site but also to the West Valley community," WVDP Deputy Director Craig Rieman said. "This infrastructure upgrade will greatly increase the site's electrical power reliability during future decommissioning and remediation activities now and will provide a reliable source of power for future cleanup activities. This investment will also increase the reliability of electrical power for the surrounding West Valley area. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, National Grid and DOE worked collaboratively to relocate transmission lines, eliminate a 1960's era electrical substation and install modern equipment that is easily accessible to the utility company and allows switching transmission paths during upset conditions."

Onsite electrical distribution was rerouted as part of the pre-planning efforts for main plant process building demolition. Removing the utility room extension (added after construction of the main plant) from service required alternate routes and new infrastructure. Crews installed new poles and overhead power lines, along with a new electrical substation. This reroute eliminated the electric distribution from the utility room extension building, which workers were able to demolish this year as part of ongoing cleanup efforts.

"Our employees and subcontractors did an excellent job in planning and executing this work," Linda Michalczak, CHBWW Projects Manager said. "This accomplishment speaks volumes on the importance of solid communication, teamwork and best practices."

During the summer, crews built a new switchgear station and installed a customized recloser (acts like a circuit breaker) and protective fence. With the switchgear station complete, National Grid connected the site to its 34.5 kV line on Aug. 23.